

Epistle

Monthly newsletter of Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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<https://www.SaintPaulsLutheranChurch.org>

NOVEMBER 2020

Thank You

*for coming and to all those who made our New Member/
Covid Reopening Worship Service a huge success!*




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November Birthdays

Nov. 5 th	Bonnie Leins Jim Titmas Tori Valcarcel
Nov. 6 th	Michael Plowman
Nov. 7 th	Kristen Jack
Nov. 9 th	Kelly Myer
Nov. 10 th	Merle Anderson
Nov. 16 th	Florence Schell Fran Zeller
Nov. 22 nd	Nicholas Kahler
Nov. 26 th	Cathy Kutz Travis Waters
Nov. 30 th	Patricia Fellows Patricia Ferguson



“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

—Isaiah 40:31



Pastor's Peace

“Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” Psalm 95:2

During these trying times of pandemic, elections, financial worries, and many other issues of this day, I believe it is imperative that we look into our lives to find the many blessings we have been given by God. Truly, St. Paul's has been blessed over this past year with 19 new members added to our roles, our congregation is growing and that is truly something to be thankful for. We have also been able to partner with the DE/MD Synod in acquiring almost \$2000.00 to enhance our audio/visual/social media ministry. This ministry has given us the opportunity to reach many who are unable to attend in-person worship for whatever reason, to include siblings in Christ who check in weekly with St. Paul's from across the country. St. Paul's has been able to spread the Good News outside of our four walls and share in the joy of God's gifts with those hungering for Christ in their lives. Additionally, congregation members have given generously of their financial gifts, as well as a variety of electronics to enhance our worship experience.

We recognize that these last months may have been difficult financially and beginning a Stewardship campaign in its usual configuration may be challenging for some members. Beginning November 1, 2020 members of the congregation will begin sharing what they are thankful for in their lives as members of St. Paul's. As we wind down our year, it would appear that the Congregation will be in a good financial position. We have been blessed with several large gifts to the church from members who have entered the church triumphant. These gifts will continue to sustain designated areas of our ministries for many years. Saying this, there are several projects that might be considered for the next year which will necessitate us to continue our faithful witness to the financial needs of the church. None of these projects have been decided upon and will of course need to be brought before the congregation for a vote as they will require spending beyond the limits of your Council. Please reach out to any councilmember to discuss and make any suggestions you might like to see come to fruition.

I am thankful for the resiliency of this congregation and how we have been able to navigate the past few months. Your church leaders have been working diligently to provide for your safety, care, and connection to Christ while also seeking ways to minister in the world. We continue to seek volunteers for various tasks within our church life to include those willing to lector, cantor, usher, be a member of council, or to assist in making our worship space safe for all who utilize our facilities. For those of you who have already stepped up, we are thankful. For those who are not sure how to help, just ask as we will point you in the right direction and we will be thankful for whatever gifts you share.

Now is the time for us to look forward to our journey ahead, now is the time to be grateful for the blessings that are found in our lives and in the life of our church. We give thanks for all the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let us be glad in the joy of St. Paul's and our lives as disciples of Christ.

Should you have any questions or concerns, I am glad to speak with you at any time.

Peace,

Pastor Phil

Email: pastor@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

Cell phone: 202-497-0584



Winter Comfort Bags – an outreach project to comfort those during the winter months who are recently bereaved, sick, elderly, unable to leave one’s home (especially during COVID) and those we care about at St. Paul’s and in our community.

Congregational Life Committee is asking for your support by donating monies or purchasing the following items to help us fill the comfort bags: packaged hard candy bags, cough drops, Chapstick (brand), playing cards, word search books, and Kleenex small square boxes.

Now through November 15 th – Submit names of loved ones to receive a comfort bag to Debbie Loso @ dloso929@gmail.com or 301-938-7901.

Now through December 6 th - Donations can be dropped off during office hours (in the designated bin) or on Sundays (church).

December 13 th @ 2 PM – Everyone is invited to help with packing the winter comfort bags in the Parish Hall.

Afterwards, we will carpool and deliver the comfort bags and sing carols.

*“Have a mind that is open to everything,
And attached to nothing.”*

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Stole Presentation 10/25/2020

The Church extended it's welcome to our Pastor Phil Beck by presenting him with a handmade stole. Member, Mary Ann Ferguson, kindly handmade the stole which references his early on, fierce dedication to Saint Paul's. The beautiful water scenes have relevance to him as he waded in the Monocacy River in search of Member's purses that were stolen from the church! Welcome Pastor and thank you!



The Stockings Must Go On!!!

St. Paul's is still providing stockings for the Glade Valley Community Services' Toy Shoppe this year. Of course, things are different, but the goal is still the same-provide a happy holiday for the children in our community. We will be stuffing stockings on November 29th at 10:30am in the Social Hall, if you are able to help please contact the office to RSVP. We need items for individual infant stockings, there will be a Signup Genius or Amazon shopping list for those items as they are determined when registration closes. Be on the lookout for that in the weekly emails this month. If you have any questions, please contact Belinda or Billie Jo. Thank you for continuing to support this worthy project, in the last 15 years we have provided 2,584 stockings to children in our area—THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU!!

In recognition of Belinda's 20 years of service to Saint Paul's.



Spark-Activate FAITH

St. Paul's strives to help families nurture their children's faith formation. On Sunday mornings at 11am beginning on November 1st weekly videos will be posted to help us all explore our faith with Spark- Activate Faith, an all kids curriculum from Augsburg Fortress. There will be printouts as well to help discover more about the story. If you are interested in receiving these printouts, please contact the office to get on the Children's Faith Formation mailing list. This cannot go out to the congregation at large due to copyright restrictions. Videos can be found on St. Paul's Facebook as well as our Youtube channel. We look forward to the time when we can gather again in person, for now let us continue to grow our faith and firm up our family foundation through the Word.

Organ Repair

“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

—Joshua J. Marine



As many of you may be aware there have been difficulties over the past several years in keeping our organ in tune and in good repair. As we schedule tuning it becomes more and more difficult to tune and maintain the tuning. There have also been some electrical challenges. In March a small committee of Pastor Ron, Jeff Gentry, Nancy Cochran, Russ Mildenstein and I met with a representative of Lewis and Hitchcock, Inc. Lewis and Hitchcock Pipe Organ Builders has merged with Lawless Associates who have been tuning our organ for several years.

The following is an overview of the results of that meeting: The organ was originally built by M. P. Moller of Hagerstown, MD in 1924. It was subsequently rebuilt by Moller in 1983. Rebuilds generally have a lifespan of approximately 40 years. Moller is no longer in business.

While there is plenty of good in the organ, it is showing signs of age and we have observed some concerns.

It may be helpful to think of the rebuild as a two-part plan:

- (1) The console and control system
- (2) The wind chests and pipework within the chamber

These two portions could be done at the same time or separately, as funds permit.

The work on the wind chests and the pipework could also be separated into two phases at a slightly higher total cost, due to duplication of work in removal and reinstallation. It would also be possible to postpone some of the re-leathering (eg. the Nazard and Tierce chests) until they start to be problematic. As a new instrument of similar size and quality would cost \$330,000 or more today, by spending about 1/3 of that amount, the church can preserve its past investment in this organ and provide reliable service for many years to come. The work can be done in two steps at \$56,000 and \$43,000. Please keep in mind the aforementioned estimate of cost referenced above is from one year ago.

However, there are several additional options to consider in thinking of the future of music at St. Paul's.

The aforementioned repair or replacement are two options. We could also consider replacing the organ with an electronic instrument that can sound like any instrument we need at any given time.

We must keep in mind all the ramifications of any decision we make:

For instance, keeping our pipe organ entails the necessity of having an organist on staff. As you know that is becoming more and more difficult, as fewer and fewer musicians are choosing the organ as their instrument.

An electronic instrument can be played by a pianist to sound like a piano, an organ, a whole orchestra, or in extreme cases it can produce the music we need by pushing a button! These electronic instruments are not just a naked keyboard – they can be attractive in the sanctuary and would also allow extra space in the chancel with the removal of the organ and the pipes. The cost of an electronic instrument can range in price from \$5,000 to \$35,000. On behalf of the Worship and Arts Committee I thank you for your prayerful consideration of this information.

**Betsy Galliher
Chair**

Worship and Arts Committee



"I can do all this through him who gives me strength." –Philippians 4:13

Stewardship & Christian Ethics in COVID19 Times

Greetings and Peace to you, my Saint Paul's family!

I have to say, I never thought that my first semester at a seminary in Berkeley, CA would look like me sitting at a computer screen in Maryland. But I can't say I'm not grateful for the chance it's given me to stay more involved in the congregational life of St. Paul's.

It is partly because of these unexpected, but not unwelcome, circumstances that I am writing to you in this month's newsletter. Both in acknowledgement of the (lifelong) support and encouragement shown to me by St. Paul's, and in an attempt to share some of what it means to begin seminary, I wanted to include you all in one of my favorite courses right now. The St. Paul's community has never hesitated to encourage seminarians in the past (Pastor Phil Beck, Katie Brundage, and Mickey Carroll being some recent examples that come to mind), but I thought that this could be a unique opportunity to share what the start of that journey is like from the inside.

As you might expect, my first semester has been full of many foundational courses. There's Foundations of Christian Spirituality, Christian Theology, Theological Academic Writing and Research, and of course Christian Ethics. (If you are wondering where Luther is, check back in with me in the spring during my Lutheran Theology class!) "Christian Ethics: Radical Love Embodied" has been unique for a few reasons- my advisor, Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, is also the professor, and it happens to be my only synchronous class (each Thursday I get to join a live Zoom call with the rest of my class for 3 hours- exhausting and rewarding!).

As a part of this course, my classmates and I are undertaking individual projects that deal with confronting and interrupting injustice. This is no small task, and part of the class is to ask what injustice is, and how Christians are called and empowered to stand against all forms of it.

My project involves economic injustice- the reality is that because of my family, you the people of St. Paul's, and the Fund for Leaders Scholarship of the ELCA, I am able to attend seminary without worrying about my financial resources, where I will live, what I will eat, or how I will afford my books next semester. This is no small feat, especially during a time of a global pandemic and its financial repercussions. It is a privilege- literally a special gift- to have this burden lifted, and because of this support, I have had the freedom to investigate what exactly I can do with the money I steward.

As we come to the time of the year when buzzwords like stewardship and giving start flying around, it is hard to imagine for many people how they can possibly give more, whether that is in tithes to the church, donations to a food bank, or checks to a charity. COVID has not only stolen the lives of loved ones, but jobs, security, housing, and a sense of normalcy. So how can we possibly consider what more we can give?

For my project, I have decided to tackle this question for myself. This involves three pieces- the first has been examining how I am choosing to invest my personal savings (this may not come as news to those of you with a few more years of financial history than I, but there are A LOT of options when it comes to one can save and invest money). The second is reaching out to you, my home congregation, to engage in the conversation of stewardship and financial resources, and finally, to reach out to Thrivent Financial to encourage them to address and reform their institutional policies that I believe are unethical in light of a Christian understanding of stewardship.

I've learned quite a bit about things like ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) and SRI (Socially Responsible) investing, and how on levels both personal and corporate, we can seek new and ever more faithful ways to live out our baptismal covenants. I have chosen to use the resources I have to invest in ways that honor my values.

My hope in sharing all this with you is that you take time, in prayer and in conversation with others, to seek out what a Christian Ethic means to you. We all have different God-given talents, passions, and resources (the beauty of the 1 Corinthians 12:12 body!). The question of how to use them to show God's love in the world is of vital importance, and one that I believe we must answer as individuals *and* as communities.

So please, ask me questions about seminary, my Ethics course, stewardship. Ask yourself questions; what does a Christian Ethic mean to you? What does it mean to love our neighbors? How can I know what is right or wrong in a situation? Above all, I encourage you to ask God; ask the Creator, through whom all things were made, what we are called to do with these gifts?

Gratefully Yours in Christ,
Tori

Christmas Eve

In the next couple of weeks, the Worship and Arts Committee needs to begin planning how we will prepare for Christmas Eve, with many plans already underway. We would like to get a sense of your current thoughts to assist the Worship and Arts committee in considering how to move forward. It does not appear we will have a separate children's service, but plan to have the youth participate in our traditional worship service.

It remains clear that close contact in an enclosed room for an extended period raises the risk of the spread of the virus. Evidence has also shown that singing, especially group or choral singing, remains an extremely dangerous activity by which the virus can be quickly spread; consequently any services we have on Christmas Eve will be somewhat abbreviated and will exclude in person singing. We will have liturgy, sermon and the celebration of Holy Communion.

We are currently offering in person and online worship with those options being available on Christmas Eve. We are trying to gauge the level of interest for attending "in-person" Christmas Eve Services so that we can plan accordingly. The requirement for physical distancing will limit how many people can attend a service. Time will also be needed to clean and sanitize worship and public spaces between services should we find the need for two services. We want to properly prepare for Christmas Eve services but need to have a sense of when and how many people desire to participate in "In-person" worship. It will also help to know if your plan is to take advantage of an online Christmas Eve service and forego "in-person" worship.

Last year's Christmas Eve attendance for both services (7pm and 9:30pm) was approximately 130 worshippers and our in-person attendance thus far has been 40 and 32 respectively the past Sundays. We are considering sending out a survey in the coming weeks to gauge your interest in participation, however getting your input sooner than later will assist us in making efficient use of our time.

Please know that the leaders, staff, and pastor of St. Paul's seek to do our best to provide for the spiritual needs of all. If you have questions, concerns or would like someone to contact you please do not hesitate to reach out by email, phone call or a letter.



*“Nothing ever goes away
until it has taught us what
we need to know.”*

—Pema Chödrön